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Borough of Leominster

HEREFORDSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

on the

State of the Public Health

For the Year 1946

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	...	...	H. F. GREEN, M.A., M.B., D.P.H. (Private Tel.: Leominster 323) (Returned to duty on the 1st September, 1946)
Acting Medical Officer of Health	...	...	I. F. MACKENZIE, M.D. (Edin.), (Deputy County Medical Officer) D.P.H., D.T.M. & H. (Relinquished duty on the 31st August, 1946)
Clerk	...	...	B. J. SCANDRETT (On War Service from 1939)
Temporary Clerk	...	...	MISS D. M. J. BRAMFITT
Sanitary Inspector	A. S. SMITH, M.S.I.A., C.R. San. I., Cert. Meat and other Foods, Cert. C.I.S. (Tel., Leom. 257).

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To the Mayor, Aldermen and Members of the Leominster Borough Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for the year 1946.

I returned to duty on the 1st September, 1946. This report deals largely, therefore, with the work of Dr. Mackenzie and the other members of the Public Health Staff. May I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Dr. Mackenzie, who in addition to his own duties as a deputy County Medical Officer of Health, has so ably carried on the duties of Medical Officer of Health in my absence on War service. Great credit is due to your Sanitary Inspector for the way in which he has kept the sanitary services functioning during the difficult war years.

A period of reconstruction is now upon us. Before the war a start had been made in improving the housing conditions in the town and the out-parish. Progress ceased when war broke out, and now the pre-war problems plus the accumulated dilapidations of the war years face us. The problem is therefore far greater than before the war and is further increased by the larger number of young families living in the town with their parents. Housing construction and water supplies are therefore the most urgent necessities, to be pressed forward as circumstances permit.

H. F. GREEN,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in Acres)	8,728
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1946) according to the Rate Books	1,623
Rateable Value	£34,265
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£136 15 6

EXTRACT FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

BIRTH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	20.4
STILL-BIRTH RATE (per 1,000 Live and Still Birth)	0.0
DEATH RATE (per 1,000 of estimated resident population)	15.1
INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE (per 1,000 live births)	16.5
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES: There were no deaths from Puerperal infection nor from other Puerperal causes in 1946.	

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1946:

LIVE BIRTH RATE	19.1
DEATH RATE	11.5
INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE	43.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Laboratory facilities continued to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS.

There are none provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district:—

Child Welfare Centre: In the annexe at the Leominster Cottage Hospital, every Friday, 2—4 p.m.

Venereal Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Orthopaedic After-Care Clinic: Organised on a voluntary basis and held at the Hospital annexe.

The County schemes also provide for Maternal and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

I am indebted to Mr. A. S. Smith, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following Statement (Sections C to E), furnished under Article 27 (Sub-Section 18) of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSPECTION.

WATER.

Chlorination of piped water supplies was continued throughout the year.

PIPED SUPPLIES.

1. The water supply of the area and of its several parts has been satisfactory (a) in quality, (b) in quantity.

2. BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Raw Water before treatment—Six samples taken and all reported upon as satisfactory.

Water after Chlorination—Twenty-nine samples taken, of which twenty-seven were reported upon as satisfactory.

3. CHEMICAL EXAMINATIONS.

Raw Water before treatment—Two samples taken and reported upon as satisfactory.

Water after Chlorination—Two samples taken and reported upon as satisfactory.

4. No plumbo-solvent action—hard water.

5. The two bacteriological samples reported upon as unsatisfactory were from the same house tap. Follow-up samples of (a) raw water before Chlorination and reception at Waterworks Well, (b) Chlorinated water in Waterworks Well, and (c) Piped supplies to houses. In all cases the re-samples were reported upon as satisfactory.

6. Number of dwelling-houses and population supplied from Public Water mains:

(a) Direct to houses—1,289 houses. Approximate population, 5,000.

(b) By means of stand pipes—101 houses. Approximate population 400.

The approximate number of houses relying on Well water is 191. Approximate population, 700.

Samples taken and submitted for analysis:—

(a) Piped supplies (house taps, waterworks well and Midsummer Meadow well	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	39
(b) Wells	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

REMARKS.

The following Out-parish areas are not provided with piped supplies: Brierley, Broadward and Elm's Green, Stagbatch, Flyde Ash, Aulden and Wintercott, Ivington, Newton, Stretford and Hennor, Wharton and Marlbrook. In general the water supplies for houses in Out-parish areas are private shallow wells, usually unlined and of a type subject to contamination. Many houses are without sufficient water during dry summers. Piped supplies exist in the Borough proper, and a portion of the Out-parish.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

HOUSE DRAINS.

New drains laid (old Houses)	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Cleansed, trapped or ventilated	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
Inspection chambers built (old Houses)	...	...	...	...	...	...	1

BOROUGH PROPER.

Drainage of old houses is in the main poor, consisting usually of unjointed pipes, devoid of inspection chambers or ventilation shafts.

No Borough Sewage works exists and sewage disposal is to an open ditch.

OUT-PARISH.

New houses drained to Septic Tanks. Old Houses generally feed to ditches.

CLOSETS.

Additional provided (old Houses)	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Conversions or renewals	...	...	...	...	...	...	6

BOROUGH PROPER.

Common usage of closets, usually by the occupants of two houses, prevails in many cases. A type of closet existing on a large scale is the long hopper with a wooden surround. As new houses come into being, and areas are cleared, common usage will cease.

OUT-PARISH.

Pail and privy closets predominate.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Flooding of the lower regions of the Borough Proper again occurred during the year. Houses in Bridge Street and Mill Street are unfortunately situated.

REFUSE DISPOSAL.

Tipping was continued at the public tip with satisfactory results. Collections in the Borough proper take place once or twice weekly according to locality. In the Out-Parish there is no public collection, though certain houses in close proximity to the Borough proper have refuse removed by the Council for a yearly charge.

RODENT CONTROL.

The sewers received full treatment on two occasions during the year with re-treatment at certain manholes. Little evidence of rat infestation was found in the sewers. The Public Abattoir and refuse tip receive periodic treatment.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

None in the Borough or Out-parish.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

Two small factories commenced during the year—mainly female labour.

TENTS AND CARAVANS.

Camping does not exist on a large scale—no sites registered.

BED BUGS.

Although many old houses are infested, one case only was reported during the year.

DISINFECTION ON ACCOUNT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

Premises fumigated 7

Mode of dis-infection: Formalin lamps and liquid spraying. Small portable Sack disinfectant is available.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

TABLE SHOWING INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR
TOGETHER WITH THE ACTION TAKEN AND THE RESULTS.

INSPECTIONS UNDER	Number	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices complied with
Housing (1936) Act	125	—	—	—
Housing (Public Health Acts) ...	228	143	33	133
Factories	11	2	—	2
Cowsheds and Dairies	58	3	—	1
Milk Samples	49	5	—	5
Bakehouses	16	1	—	1
Food Premises and Kitchens ...	47	—	—	—
Abattoir	1,095	—	—	—
Drains (Smoke and Water tests) ...	22	—	—	—
Water Samples	42	1	—	1
Infectious Diseases	9	—	—	—
Rodent Control	20	—	—	—
Ice Cream Premises	18	—	—	—
Ice Cream Samples	7	2	—	2
Other Samples	1	—	—	—
Miscellaneous Visits	77	—	—	—
TOTALS	1,825	157	33	145
Defects remedied ... ..	...	...	...	157
Dustbins renewed ... ..	...	...	...	82

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

During the month of November TWENTY aluminium temporary prefabricated bungalows were erected and inhabited. Tenants are highly delighted with their new homes. Hundreds of families are clamouring for better and brighter conditions; this is not surprising having regard to the unfortunate and unhappy conditions under which one-third of the population live. Approximately one-half of the privately owned houses in the Borough are only fit for demolition and replacement. Work is proceeding slowly with the erection of permanent brick houses on what is known as the Gateway Lane site, but no Council houses had been completed by the 31st December. One privately built house was completed and occupied during December.

The present position is approximately as follows:—

	Categories					Total.
	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of Houses ...	770	205	96	9	501	1,581
Category 1 — Satisfactory.						
„ 2 — Minor Defects.						
„ 3 — Requiring repair, structural alteration or improvement.						
„ 4 — Appropriate for reconditioning under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts.						
„ 5 — Required demolition and replacement.						

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

1. (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts ...	...	...	...	227
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	...	...	...	353
2. Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, reasonably fit for human habitation ...	...	...	...	81

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY NOTICES DURING THE YEAR.

Proceedings under the Public Health Act:—

1. Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ...	...	...	...	33
2. Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices ...	...	...	...	28
(a) By owners ...	...	...	...	28
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners ...	...	...	...	Nil

VAN DWELLINGS.—Nil.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

1. MILK SUPPLY.

Routine inspections of farms and dairies.

(a) Examination for bacterial content—Samples sent to County Laboratory.

(b) Examination for Tubercle Bacilli—None by Local Authority.

Two Cowhouses have been brought up to higher standards.

2. FOOD PREMISES.

Routine inspections from time to time. General standard of cleanliness is good.

3. ICE CREAM.

Sample Number and Date	Colony Count of Bacteria developing from 1.0 ml.	Faecal Coliform Bacilli	Blood Agar Plates	Organisms of enteric, salmonella or dysentery groups
1. 26/8/46	8,480,000	Present in 0.1 ml.	Non-haemolytic Streptococci	No organisms
2. 26/8/46	30,000,000	Present in 0.01 ml.	do	do.
3. 26/8/46	4,300	Absent in 0.1 ml.	Non-haemolytic streptococci and anthracoid bacilli	do.
4. 4/9/46	2,240	do.	Anthracoïd bacilli only	do.
5. 4/9/46	2,720	do.	do.	do.
RE-SAMPLES				
1. 4/9/46	4,000	do.	Nil significant	do.
2. 4/9/46	128,000	do.	Anthracoïd bacilli and alpha haemolytic Streptococci	do.

The improved reports on Nos. 1 and 2 re-samples followed communications and visits to premises.

REPORT ON GELATINE STABILISER originally used in No. 1 sample

Colony count of bacteria developing from 1.0 grms. ... 370

Faecal coli bacilli present in 0.1 grms.

4. MEAT.

MEAT INSPECTION (PUBLIC ABATTOIR).

Centralised slaughtering under the Ministry of Food scheme of control is in operation. Areas served are Leominster Borough, Leominster and Wigmore Rural District, Kington Urban and Rural Districts, and Weobley Rural District. Inspection is carried out by your Sanitary Inspector, who is a qualified Meat Inspector. This responsibility entails for him additional evening and week-end work.

The undernoted were slaughtered and inspected during the year:

Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves	Total
1,407	152	6,201	137	7,897

Diseased Meat discovered and dealt with.

ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole carcasses condemned ...	27	1	36	7
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned ...	523	13	499	2
Percentage of number affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis	39.0%	9.2%	8.6%	6.6%

TUBERCULOSIS ONLY

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whose carcasses condemned ...	18	1	—	—
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned ...	27	—	—	—
Percentage of number affected with Tuberculosis	3.2%	.7%	—	—
Weight of diseased meat discovered and dealt with ...	32,638lbs.	47 lbs.	3,235lbs.	543lbs.

The percentage figures show the proportion of food animals found diseased.

METHOD OF INSPECTION.

In accordance with the Ministry of Health Memorandum 62 (Foods), with certain relaxations.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, are well observed by all meat traders. No Meat Marketing Scheme under Part III. of the Regulations is in operation. Byelaws are in force respecting slaughter-houses.

5. OTHER FOODS.

The undernoted foods were surrendered during the year.—Canned goods and packages. 57 tins Fruit/Vegetables; 8 packets and 13lbs. Cereals; 35 stone Fish; 34 jars Pickled Foods; 102 tins Corned Beef/Mutton; 12lbs. Bacon; 4lbs. Cheese; 160 tins Milk; 3 tins Soup; 25 packets Cake Mixture/Powder; 34½lbs. Sausages; 2 tins Meat and Vegetables; 15 tins/jars Jam; 12lbs. Flour; 3 Hams (Salvaged); 10lbs. Biscuits; 24 tins Fruit Cocktail; 25lbs. Prunes; 4cwts. Sugar (Salvaged); 313lbs. Imported Beef.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The number of cases of infectious diseases notified as occurring within the Borough has been exceptionally low. The one case of Diphtheria occurred in the Out-Parish. The person infected had not been immunised against Diphtheria.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE DURING THE YEAR

	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital
Pneumonia	8	—
Scarlet Fever	2	1
Measles	2	—
Whooping Cough	4	—
Diphtheria	1	1
Erysipelas	1	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	—

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES, ACCORDING TO AGE.

<i>Disease.</i>	<i>Age of Patient.</i>														
	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	Over 40	Unknown	Total
Pneumonia ...	|	|	|	|	1	|	|	|	1	|	|	1	4	1	8
Scarlet Fever ...	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	1	1	|	|	2
Measles ...	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	1	|	|	|	|	1	|	2
Whooping Cough...	|	1	1	1	|	1	|	|	|	|	1	|	|	|	4
Diphtheria ...	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	1	|	|	|	1
Erysipelas...	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	1	|	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	|	1	1	|	|	2

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

The state of immunisation of the child population of the district at the end of 1946 is indicated in the table below.

	Under 5 years of age		Between 5 and 15 years of age		Total Under 15
	Number	Percentage of group	Number	Percentage of group	Number
Locals	144	29.9%	461	56.9%	605
Evacuees (all Ages)	—	—	—	—	172

Since practically all evacuees had returned to their homes by the end of 1946, it was felt desirable to sub-divide the groups of children immunised into "locals" and evacuees. All the records have therefore been re-checked. The figures given this year are not strictly comparable to those given in the Annual Reports of 1945 and 1944. A further source of inaccuracy lies in the fact that a number of children have been immunised privately by their own doctors, some with a plain diphtheria antigen such as A.P.T. or T.A.F., and some with a proprietary combined diphtheria-whooping cough antigen.

The figures, however, do reveal a considerable falling off in the number of children aged 0—4 years of age, immunised in the years 1942-1946.

"Local" children aged 0—4 years.

Year	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Number immunised during year	82	8	66	78	41	31	41	50
Total immunised at any time.	82	69	119	164	155	156	145	144

"Immunised" indicates only those children who have completed a full course of injections.

The immunisation scheme was started in 1939. The novelty of the scheme to parents proved a great attraction, but as the novelty wore off and cases of diphtheria became extremely rare, it has become increasingly difficult to prevent parents from putting off the immunisation course from day to day until it never gets done at all. In order to obtain and maintain a satisfactory response, it is necessary to graft on the population immunisation as a normal social habit—that the children are immunised just as they are fed, washed and kept clean.

On 31st July, 1946, the general practitioners scheme came into force, by which those children who could not make use of the Council's scheme could obtain free immunisation from their own Doctor. The scheme has worked smoothly, and more children are now being immunised. Furthermore records are more complete.

TUBERCULOSIS.

At the end of 1946, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of 25 males and 13 females who normally reside within the Borough.

During the year, 14 new cases were notified, nine on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis and five because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs. During the same period, five deaths of persons suffering from Tuberculosis occurred, three people recovered, and four left the district.

CASES ON THE TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER

Year					Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1939 ... ..	...	...	...	...	6	6	12
1940 ... ..	...	...	...	...	9	9	18
1941 ... ..	...	...	...	...	11	13	24
1942 ... ..	...	...	...	...	13	14	27
1943 ... ..	...	...	...	...	14	14	28
1944 ... ..	...	...	...	...	20	16	36
1945 ... ..	...	...	...	...	20	16	36
1946 ... ..	...	...	...	...	21	17	38

CAUSES OF DEATH (ALL AGES)

Disease			Males	Females	Total
Tuberculosis ... ..	...	...	1	4	5
Cancer (all forms) ... ..	...	...	10	4	14
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries ... ..	...	...	11	14	25
Influenza ... ..	...	...	1	2	3
Diabetes ... ..	...	...	1	—	1
Intra-cranial Vascular lesions ... ..	...	...	4	4	8
Bronchitis and Pneumonia ... ..	...	...	3	2	5
Other Respiratory Diseases ... ..	...	...	1	—	1
Appendicitis ... ..	...	...	1	—	1
Diseases of the Digestive System ... ..	...	...	2	3	5
Nephritis ... ..	...	...	2	4	6
Premature Birth ... ..	...	...	—	1	1
Congenital Conditions (at birth) ... ..	...	...	—	1	1
Violence (including Road Traffic					
		Accidents	5	1	6
All other causes ... ..	...	...	6	2	8

